



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

News Media Information 202-418-0500
Internet: www.fcc.gov
TTY: 888-835-5322

DA 21-1215

Released: September 28, 2021

WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU REMINDS WIRELESS HANDSET MANUFACTURERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS OF UPCOMING CHANGES TO HEARING AID COMPATIBILITY DEPLOYMENT BENCHMARKS

WT Docket Nos. 15-285, 20-3

The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau reminds wireless handset manufacturers and service providers of upcoming increases in deployment benchmarks for hearing aid-compatible handsets. Specifically, the benchmark for handset manufacturers will increase from 66% to 85% on October 4, 2021,¹ and the benchmark for Tier I service providers will increase from 66% to 85% on April 4, 2022.² For non-Tier I service providers, the benchmark will increase from 66% to 85% on April 3, 2023.³

The upcoming changes to the deployment benchmarks will ensure that at least 85% of covered wireless handsets are hearing aid-compatible in the near future. The Commission adopted a schedule for phased increases after finding that the new benchmarks would significantly benefit consumers by expanding access to hearing aid-compatible handsets.⁴ The Commission continues to assess whether further changes are needed to facilitate use of wireless handsets by those with hearing loss, including whether to require 100% of covered handsets to be hearing aid-compatible.⁵ The Commission will also review the Hearing Aid Compatibility Task Force's final report on this topic, which is due by December 31, 2022.⁶

The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau reminds handset manufacturers and service providers that they must comply with the new 85% benchmark and the Commission's other hearing aid compatibility rules.⁷ Failing to comply with the benchmark or other hearing aid compatibility rules could lead to enforcement proceedings and possible forfeitures.

For further information, please contact Eli Johnson, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau at (202) 418-1395 or email: eli.johnson@fcc.gov.

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¹ 47 CFR § 20.19(c)(1)(ii).

² 47 CFR § 20.19(c)(2)(ii).

³ 47 CFR § 20.19(c)(3)(ii).

⁴ *Improvements to Benchmarks and Related Requirements Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets*, WT Docket No. 15-285, Report and Order, 31 FCC Rcd 9336, 9345, para. 25 (2016) (*Benchmark Order*).

⁵ *See Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing Standards for Hearing Aid-Compatible Handsets*, WT Docket No. 20-3, Report and Order, 36 FCC Rcd 4566, 4574-75, 4577-78, paras. 19-20, 27-28 (2021) (*2021 ANSI Standard Order*).

⁶ *See 2021 ANSI Standard Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 4577-78, paras. 27-28; *Benchmark Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9349, 9352-53, paras. 34, 41.

⁷ *See* 47 CFR § 20.19.